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AUTHOR Rosenkoetter, Sharon; Shotts, Cynthia
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ABSTRACT

This packet provides a variety of information pieces to help early childhood educational programs prepare young children with disabilities for transition out of one program and into another. The booklet opens with sample thoughts children may have when anticipating transition. Next, 20 possible differences among programs are specifically identified, and an overall plan for preparing the child for transition is offered. Other single-page information items address: skills which ease preschool entry, non-academic skills important for transition to kindergarten, books to prepare children for transition, a synthesis of "best practice" guidelines for early childhood services, supporting the child's transition within the sending program, supporting the child's transition within the receiving program, and an individual transition plan form. (DB)

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THOUGHTS CHILDREN MAY HAVE WHEN ANTICIPATING TRANSITION

Why do I have to go to a new school?

Will my old teacher come with me to my new school?

Will I get to play with my old friends again?

I want to be big.

I want to be little.

Will my new teacher be nice?

What will happen if I miss the bus?

Do I have to be quiet at school?

What if I need to go to the bathroom?

Where will I sleep at school?

Will there be big kids on the playground?

What if I don't like the food at lunch time?

What if my mom doesn't come to pick me up?

What will the teacher do if the kids aren't "good"?

Can I bring my toys to school? Or my blanket?

Can my mom stay with me at school for a while?

Do I get to play at school?

Can I be with my favorite friends?

Where will my Mom and Dad be when I'm in school?

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POTENTIAL DIFFERENCES AMONG PROGRAMS

1. Teacher/child ratio.
2. Home visits, classroom sessions, combination services.
3. Parent involvement.
4. Transportation.
5. Number of children in setting.
6. Length of class periods.
7. Expectations for independent play and work habits.
8. Size of instructional groups.
9. Amount and availability of teacher attention and individual assistance.
10. Type of teacher instructions (content, timing, to group rather than individual).
11. Expectations for personal responsibility (e.g., dressing, toileting, care of personal materials).
12. Location of school areas outside the classroom (e.g., bathroom, library, playground).
13. Expected skills with new learning equipment (e.g., tape recorders, headphones, worksheets, writing utensils--fat vs. skinny pencils or crayons).
14. Opportunities for children to make choices.
15. Philosophies of instruction and behavior management.
16. Amount of self monitoring required.
17. Amount of group planning.
18. Emphasis on active learning vs. listening.
19. Presence of adaptive equipment.
20. Daily routines.

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HOW CAN WE PREPARE THE CHILD FOR TRANSITION?

ASSESS:

- Parent wishes
- Potential receiving programs - interviews, visits
- The present program
- The child
- The whole class/caseload
- Community resources

PLAN:

- Partnership with parents, as they wish to be involved
- Transition outcomes for the IFSP, or transition goals and objectives for the IEP
- Curriculum strategies for the whole class/caseload
- Instruction and experiences to accomplish those objectives
- Use of family and community resources
- Evaluation of the child preparation activities

IMPLEMENT:

- Transition activities with the whole class/caseload
- Work on particular skills needed by the individual child
- Activities parents have requested to support transition skills development at home
- Assistance to adults in other community programs who are helping in the child's transition plan

EVALUATE:

- The child's progress toward goals
- The impact of transition planning on the class/caseload
- Parent satisfaction with the process
- Sending and receiving teachers' satisfaction
- Child satisfaction

- From Rosenkoetter, S.E., Hains, & Fowler. (In production). Bridging Early Services: Transition planning for young children with special needs.

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SKILLS WHICH EASE PRESCHOOL ENTRY

SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

1. Separates from parents for short periods of time.
2. Communicates with adults who are not family members.
3. Responds positively to social recognition from non-family members.
4. Expresses emotions appropriately for developmental level.
5. Tries new activities.
6. Imitates other children's actions.
7. Initiates contact with adults and children.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1. Uses a signal to gain attention or to obtain objects.
2. Communicates own wants and needs, such as eating, drinking or toileting.
3. Makes eye contact with speakers.
4. Attends to speakers for at least brief periods.
5. Responds to adults when called by name.
6. Seeks help from adults.
7. Follows some one-step directions.
8. Initiates interaction with other children and adults.
9. Responds to questions.

SELF-CARE SKILLS

1. Feeds self.
2. Responds to warning words.
3. Puts on or removes simple garments.
4. Recognizes own belongings.

COGNITIVE SKILLS

1. Recognizes relatives and other significant people.
2. Explores objects and places.
3. Demonstrates awareness of cause and effect.
4. Combines pieces of toys or sets of materials.
5. Avoids obvious dangers.

-See also Rosenkoetter, S.E. (1990). First day of kindergarten: What teachers expect from children. Toronto: CEC, and Heins, A.H., Fowler, Schwartz, Kottwitz, & Rosenkoetter. (1989). A cpmparison of preschool and kindergarten teacher expectations for school readiness. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 4(1), 75-88.

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NON ACADEMIC SKILLS IMPORTANT FOR TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

PLAYING/WORKING INDEPENDENTLY AND COLLABORATIVELY

1. Plays/works appropriately with and without peers.
2. Completes tasks approximately on time.
3. Stays with an activity for an appropriate amount of time.
4. Plays/works with few individual prompts from teacher.

INTERACTING WITH PEERS

1. Imitates peer actions when learning new routines.
2. Initiates and maintains contact with peers.
3. Responds to peers' initiations.
4. Learns and uses names of peers.
5. Shares objects and turns with peers.
6. Plans with peers.

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

1. Responds to adult questions.
2. Responds appropriately to multi-step verbal directions.
3. Responds appropriately to verbal directions which include common school-related prepositions, nouns, and verbs.
4. Complies with group instructions as well we individual ones.
5. Modifies behavior when given verbal feedback.
6. Recalls and follows directions for tasks discussed/demonstrated previously.
7. Watches others or seeks help if doesn't understand directions.

RESPONDING TO ROUTINES

1. Learns new routines after limited practice opportunities.
2. Moves quickly and quietly from one activity to another without individual reminders.
3. Reacts appropriately to changes in routine.
4. Cares for personal belongings.

CONDUCTING SELF ACCORDING TO CLASSROOM RULES

1. Waits appropriately.
2. Lines up if teacher requests to do so.
3. Sits appropriately.
4. Focuses attention on the speaker, shifts attention appropriately, and participates in class activities in a manner relevant to the task or topic.
5. Seeks teacher attention or assistance in acceptable ways.
6. Separates from parents and accepts the authority of school personnel.
7. Expresses emotions or feelings appropriately.

- See also Rosenkoetter, S.E. (1990). First day of kindergarten: What teachers expect from children. Toronto: CEC, and Hains, A.H., Fowler, Schwartz, Kottwitz, & Rosenkoetter. (1989). A comparison of preschool and kindergarten teacher expectations for school readiness. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 4(1), 75-88.

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BOOKS TO PREPARE CHILDREN FOR TRANSITION

This list is reprinted by permission from Transition, published by the Head Start Bureau, U.S. Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, Washington, D.C.

Author	Title
Alexander	Sabrina
Allard	Miss Nelson Is Missing!
Anderson	Carlos Goes to School
Arnold	Where Do You Go to School?
Barkin	I'D Rather Stay Home
Barkin	Sometimes I Hate School
Behrens	What I Hear in My School
Berenstain	The Berenstain Bears Go to School
Boyd	I Met a Polar Bear
Bram	I Don't Want To Go to School
Breinburg	Shawn Goes to School
Buchmeier	I Know a Teacher
Burningham	The School
Calmenson	The Kindergarten Book
Cassidy	We Like Kindergarten
Caudill	A Pocketful of Cricket
Charles	Calico Cat at School
Cohen	The New Teacher
Cohen	No Good in Art
Cohen	When Will I Read
Cohen	See You Tomorrow, Charles
Cohen	Will I Have a Friend?
Cohen	First Grade Takes a Test
Cole	What's Good for a Five-Year-Old?
Delton	The New Girl at School
Elliott	Grover Goes to School
Frandsen	I started School Today
Gordon	Crystal is the New Girl
Haas	A Special Place for Johnny
Hamilton-Meritt	My First Days of School
Harris	The School Mouse
Hillert	Who Goes to School?
Hoffman	Steffie and Me
Holland	First Day of School
Horvath	Will the Real Tommy Wilson Please Stand Up
Hurd	Come with Me to Nursery School
Isadora	Willaby
Jones	Going to Kindergarten
Lenski	Debbie Goes to Nursery School
Lexau	I Hate Red Rover
Lystad	Jennifer Takes Over P.S. 94
Mann	The 25 Cent Friend
Marino	Where Are the Mothers?
Marshall	Fox at School
Marshall	Miss Nelson Is Back
Mason	I Go to School
Matthias	Out the Door
McInnes	Goodnight Painted Pony
Meshover	The Monkey that Went to School
Nichols	Big Paul's School Bus
Oppenheim	Mrs. Peloski's Snake
Ormsby	Twenty One Children
Oxenbury	First Day of School
Parish	Jumper Goes to School
Quackenbush	First Grade Jitters
Relf	The First Day of School
Relf	Show and Tell
Rockwell	My Nursery School
Rogers	Mr. Rogers Talks about...
Schick	The Little School at Cottonwood Corners
Schwartz	Bea and Mr. Jones
Simon	I'm Busy Too
Stein	A Child Goes to School
Steiner	I'd Rather Stay with You
Steptoe	Jeffrey Bear Cleans Up His Act
Thwaite	The Chatterbox
Tobias	The Dawdlewalk
Udry	What Mary Jo Shared
Welber	Goodbye, Hello
Wells	Timothy Goes to School
Wiseman	Morris Goes to School
Wittman	The Wonderful Mrs. Trumbly
Wolde	Betsy's First Day at Nursery School
Wolf	Adam Smith Goes to School
Wooley	Gus Was a Real Dumb Ghost

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A SYNTHESIS OF "BEST PRACTICES' GUIDELINES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES"

INTEGRATED

Supported placement in generic early childhood service sites.
Systematic contact with nonhandicapped peers.
Planned integration at all levels.

COMPREHENSIVE

Comprehensive assessment, planning, programming, service coordination, and evaluation.
Models theoretically and procedurally well-defined.
Transdisciplinary approach to the delivery of related services.
Direct instruction of generalized responding.

NORMALIZED

Support for parenting role.
Age appropriate skills and instructional strategies.
Concurrent training across skill areas.
Distributed practice across settings.
Establishment of self-initiated responding.
Avoidance of artificial reinforcement and aversive control techniques.

ADAPTABLE

Flexible procedures within noncategorical models.
Support of different family structures.
Emphasis on function rather than form of response.
Programming changes based on individual, formative evaluation.

PEER AND FAMILY REFERENCED

Curriculum that is referenced to individual child, family, peers, and community.
Parents are full partners in educational planning and decision-making.
Systematic communication between family and service providers.
Planned enhancement of child's skill development within family routine.

OUTCOME-BASED

Variety of outcome measures.
Preparation for future integrated settings.
Curricular emphasis on skills with present and future utility.
Transition planning.

--from McDonnell, A., & Hardman, M. (1988). A synthesis of "best practice" guidelines for early childhood services. Journal of the Division for Early Childhood, 12, 328-341.

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SUPPORTING THE CHILD'S TRANSITION WITHIN THE SENDING PROGRAM

This list contains some ideas that sending program staff may incorporate into their transition curriculum. Some of the suggestions may be used regardless of the type of program a child will enter. Others require knowledge about the receiving program.

A. During the year before a child will leave your program

- Plan with parents and receiving program to provide some common routines and objectives for skill development.
- Talk with the family about transition and the differences between the sending and receiving programs.
- Gradually give children more responsibility for their personal and classroom/family possessions.
- Teach children to ask for assistance in nondisruptive ways (e.g., to ask politely, to stand by you and seek eye contact, to raise hands).
- Teach children to follow directions given individually, to small groups, and to the whole class.
- Gradually reduce the number of prompts given to children for tasks.
- Gradually increase the amount of time children work and/or play independently and with peers.
- Include play activities that encourage peer interaction and cooperation.
- Encourage children to complete one task before starting another.
- Provide a variety of cues to signal changes in classroom activities such as flicking the lights off and on, verbal instructions, timers, identify groups of students wearing certain colors, or types of clothing, etc.
- Teach children to recognize their written name and to claim ownership of materials and possessions.
- Teach children to follow routines at the end of activities and during home or classroom transitions such as putting away materials.
- Teach safety rules for crossing the street, riding a bus, etc.
- Take a field trip on a bus.
- Talk about meeting new children and ways to make new friends. Provide opportunities for children to meet other children.
- Provide opportunities for field trips to other classrooms or schools.

B. During the 6 months before a child will be leaving your program

- Read stories about a variety of different transition experiences to children.
- Gradually decrease and delay attention and praise provided to individual children during work and play activities.
- Teach children to line up and move in lines, if that will be important in the new program.
- Give children exposure to unfamiliar settings and unfamiliar people.
- Vary the duration of activities.
- Vary the amount of help provided during tasks.
- Vary the type and number of instructions provided.
- Teach children to toilet independently, if appropriate.

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C. During the last 2 weeks before a child will be leaving your program

- Talk to the child about transition and the differences between the sending and receiving programs.
- Listen to child's fears or concerns about the coming change.
- Look at pictures of the new school building, classroom, and teacher.
- Write child's dictated story about going to his new school.
- Provide materials used in the new program in the dramatic play area
- Teach children the difference between boy and girl restrooms, if that will be important in the new program.
- Arrange for the children to spend an hour in the new program while it is in session before they make the transition.
- Teach children some of the routines that are used in the new program.
- Talk to children about and use some of the rules that are used in the new program.

D. After the child leaves your program:

- Contact parents to evaluate their satisfaction with the transition.
- Keep in touch with new program to assist if questions arise.
- Evaluate the transition, identify any improvements needed.

List some of your own ideas:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

- Adapted from work by Lynette K. Chandler.

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SUPPORTING THE CHILD'S TRANSITION WITHIN THE RECEIVING PROGRAM

This list contains some ideas that receiving program staff may incorporate into their transition curriculum. Some of the suggestions may be used regardless of the types of program a child attended previously. Others require knowledge about the sending program.

Before the beginning of school

- Plan with sending program and parents to provide some familiar routines and objects.
- Invite parents to a program orientation meeting. Describe your classroom, typical goals, and provide the opportunity for parents to ask questions.
- Provide parents with a schedule of appropriate times to call or visit the program. Develop a communication schedule with families.
- Invite parents to bring their children to a "Get Acquainted Open House". Provide a tour of the school, classroom, restroom, playground, and make sure parents can meet all the staff who will be working with their children.

During the first week or two

- Talk about the new program with the children. Talk about how they are growing up and that you know the new program is different and maybe a little scary, but that it can be fun too.
- Initially provide a lot of time for play activities that encourage peer interaction and cooperation.
- Provide simple, 1-2 step instructions and gradually teach more complicated and lengthy directions.
- Demonstrate the meaning of instruction words.
- Review the procedures for and the location of the restrooms with children daily during the first few weeks of class.
- Review classroom rules, routines, and other procedures with children daily during the first few weeks of class; fade these instructions gradually.
- Identify the skill level of transitioning children. Adapt the curriculum to begin at their level and build from it. Provide lots of success.
- Use behavior management procedures that were employed in a child's sending program. These may be faded during the year as skills advance.
- Find out if particular children have favorite toys, rewards, etc. Use these during the first few weeks and fade them to regular classroom toys and reward systems.
- Find out if children know each other at the beginning of the year. Assign children to "buddies" that they know, or assign children already in the program to be buddies for new children.
- Use familiar curricular materials from the sending program as supplements to existing curriculum (e.g., songs, books, games, etc.).

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During the first few months

- Use material rewards if needed, but fade them to social rewards as soon as possible.
- Vary the duration and type of activities.
- Vary the amount of help provided during academic tasks. Vary the type and number of instructions provided.
- Use games that promote cooperation and collaboration or that allow group responses; minimize competition.
- Provide a parent-staff get together so parents have a comfortable opportunity to ask questions about their child's program and progress and meet staff and other parents.
- Contact sending staff to report progress and evaluate transition success.

List some of your own ideas:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

- Adapted from work by Lynette K. Chandler

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INDIVIDUAL TRANSITION PLAN

CHILD'S NAME:_____ DATE:_____
CHILD'S AGE:_____ CURRENT PLACEMENT:_____
PARENT'S NAME:_____ RELATED SERVICES:_____
PROPOSED PLACEMENT:_____

CHILD'S OBJECTIVE RELATED TO TRANSITION	PARENT ACTION	CURRENT STAFF ACTION	RECEIVING STAFF ACTION	TIMELINE

From Idaho Early Childhood Procedures Manual

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ACTIVITY	DATE INITIATED	DATE COMPLETED
1. Meet with family - Release information Parent role in Transition		
2. Contact receiving Agency		
3. Pre staff options		
4. Sending staff observes placement options, assess environments		
5. Receiving staff observes child in current placement		
6. Schedule family to visit placement options		
7. Write transition plan for child for proposed placement		
8. Adapt curriculum and environment, implement plan		
9. Schedule CST, write IEP, transfer records		
10. Evaluation follow-up to transition		